Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph [0033] which bridges pages 10 and 11 with the following amended paragraph:

[0033] The feed crucible 1, solidification crucible 2, condensation vapor passage plates 5 and entrapment/solidification vapor passage plates 7 may be formed of any materials that are not reactive with the feed metal, the impurities in it and the process atmosphere and which yet can resist heat. Preferred examples are carbon and graphite. If desired, a single vessel of cylindrical shape may be used both as the feed crucible 1 and as the solidification crucible 2; if it is to be used as a solidification crucible, it is bottomless and held in the upper position, but if it is to be used as a feed crucible, it may be furnished with a receptacle 8 at the bottom end that has a close fit to prevent leakage of the melt from the bottom. Thus, in order to further improve the purity of the metal solidified in the solidification crucible 2, the latter is lowered down to the feed heating zone as the solidified metal remains adhering to its inner surface and the second cycle of purification is performed using it as the feed crucible 1; in this way, a metal of even higher purity can be obtained while preventing the loss of the feed metal.

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 2 and 3. The attached sheets of drawings, which include FIGS. 1 to 3, replace the original drawing sheets which included FIGS. 1 to 3.

In FIG. 2, "(a)" and "(b)" were deleted and were replaced with --FIG. 2A- and --FIG. 2B--, respectively.

In FIG. 3, "(a") and "(b)" were deleted and were replaced with --FIG.3A- and --FIG. 3B--, respectively.

Attachments: (1) Replacement Drawing Sheets for FIGS. 1 to 3

(2) Annotated Sheets showing changes to FIGS. 2 and 3